

UTHealth McGovern Medical School Faculty Senate

Thursday, January 21, 2020 | 4:30 pm

WEBEX Meeting

1. Call to Order at 4:30PM
2. Approval of Minutes (November 2020, completed by acclamation)
3. Reports (20 minutes)
 - a. Faculty Affairs - Dr. Kevin Morano
 - i. Women Faculty Forum Video (“Picture a Scientist”) previously screened is going to be made available at a later date from faculty affairs
 - ii. Andrew Casas gave an update on the COVID-19 vaccination status for UTHealth on 01/18/2021: ~17,000 surveys sent out; ~8000 responded; >5300 have received vaccinations at the medical school
 1. Vaccinations have been moved to the Cooley Center
 2. ~1000 of physicians have been vaccinated at affiliate hospital sites (i.e., LBJ and Memorial Hermann)
 3. UTH is now a vaccination hub for the state. First priority is our own patients. Not ready to reach out to the general public yet.
 4. ~500 patients being emailed/texted/contacted daily to schedule vaccination
 5. <https://inside.uth.edu/covid-19/index.htm>
 - iii. Vaccination encouraged
 1. Vaccination is still available to students and faculty/staff (email: COVIDVaccine@uth.tmc.edu)
 2. Currently no mechanism for UTH to know that a person received the vaccine outside of UTH. A process to count these people is being developed
 3. Currently no plans to prioritize UTH employees’ family members
 4. No discussion at this time to make this vaccine mandatory
 5. Senators propose that the vaccination rate and the low rate of serious side effects should be advertised to the UTH community to encourage a higher vaccination rate among employees
 - b. Research/Dean Search Update – Dr. Michael Blackburn scheduled but was unable to present so presentation given by Dr. Kevin Morano
 1. MMS Dean search update: The position has been posted publicly and plan for interviews in the spring
 2. \$100 million funding in COVID related research funding has been received by UTH
 - c. Interfaculty Council – Dr. Catherine Ambrose
 - i. Report regarding the Ombud’s office:
 1. 560 visits for the Ombud’s office; 174 from the medical school; 149 were related to safety and possibly COVID related

- ii. Faculty Affairs subcommittee asking for a list of resources that faculty would want to have. Specifically, the subcommittee is looking to understand what resources are currently available and what resources are desired but unavailable. The list of resources will be collated for ease of access. Please email Dr. Ambrose or Dr. Linh Bui if there are resources you think should be included. Suggestions:
 - 1. Faculty development
 - 2. HR concerns
 - 3. Financial concerns
 - 4. Legal/IT concerns

4. Covid-19 Update – Dr. Luis Ostrosky

- a. ~400,000 US deaths related to COVID since the first case in the USA
- b. Locally we are experiencing a surge: more than 4000 cases a day; in October this was ~400 cases a day
 - i. ~300 hospitalizations daily; positivity was 20% last week and is down to 18% today. Positivity was at 5% when schools were reopened in the second half of 2020
- c. 130 patients with COVID at MHH-TMC; >40 at LBJ
- d. Some elective procedures that require ICU beds are being cancelled/postponed
- e. Low positivity among staff, faculty, and students
- f. Community enthusiasm for the vaccine is there
 - i. Memorial Hermann gave 15,000 doses over this past weekend to the community. Slots were booked in just 2 hours
- g. Vaccine side effects experience at UTH:
 - i. Pfizer vaccine: fever, malaise, and myalgias (more pronounced after the second dose), only one anaphylactic reaction which was treated
 - ii. Moderna vaccine: similar but also seeing rashes and hives 1 week after vaccination along with lymphadenopathy, two anaphylactic type reactions
 - 1. Rashes have responded to topical steroids if it's just at the vaccination site, but if more disseminated antihistamines were used
 - 2. NSAIDs for the lymphadenopathy; no further testing necessary; it can be pretty dramatic
- h. Research
 - i. Monoclonal clinical trial ongoing
 - 1. Reduces viral loads
 - 2. Avoiding admissions and disseminated disease, especially among the nursing home population
 - ii. Employee antibody study ongoing
 - 1. Monitor vaccinated people and antibody testing (both quantitative and qualitative testing)
 - 2. Neutralizing antibodies and T-cell assays
- i. Different strains: More easily transmissible, lower inoculant, no evidence that it is more lethal. Vaccine seems to cover the variants (UK for sure, some data on

the South African variant emerging). Some of these variants are already here in the community.

- i. New travel restrictions anticipated from the CDC (7-day quarantine once coming to the US, negative COVID before allowed on a plane to the US)
 - ii. Some of the variants may not be covered by the monoclonal antibodies
 - iii. Vaccination thought to be best defense against the development of new variants
- j. Antibodies
- i. Anti-nucleic acid will not be present after vaccination
 - ii. Anti-spike will be present after vaccination
 - iii. Levels that confer protection are unknown
 - iv. Wait at least 2 weeks after the second dose to test for antibodies

5. Old Business

a. Mentoring Taskforce – Dr. Nahid Rianon

- i. Meeting once a month
- ii. Pilot run by Dr. Keely Smith already in place (in its second year)
 1. Group mentoring – mentors with diverse backgrounds and multiple mentees from various specialties
 2. Professional growth and promotional guidelines
- iii. Chronus software used by HR in development
 1. New hires will be entering information in this software of their needs
 2. HR will help match with a mentor
- iv. Drafting a structure of the program for the medical school
 1. 2-3 mentors grouped with a cohort 10 or so mentees
 2. Email Drs. Ambrose and Rianon if you have questions or concerns regarding this

6. New Business (10 minutes)

a. International Day of Women and Girls in Science Symposium 2021 – Dr. Susan Wootton

- i. February 11th is International Day of Women and Girls in Science
 1. Stakeholders (governments, foundations, private sector, civil society, scientists) gather annually to support women and girls in science and innovation around the world
 2. Plan for 2021 virtual event with a capacity up to 3000 (both external and internal to UTH)
 - a. February 11, 2021, 4-6PM on WebEx
 - i. Nancy Hopkins, PhD, is speaking on “Reflections on the Changing Status of Women in Science”
 - ii. Other speakers include Amber Luong, Angela Stotts, Kristin Eckel-Mahan.

- b. 77 have registered as of today, comprised of faculty, postdocs, undergraduates, research assistants, and medical students
 - 3. Please encourage registration among constituents. To register <https://go.uth.edu/IDWGS>
 - a. The WebEx link will be sent 24 hours before the event. Target audience is both men and women.
 - 4. Questions: Maaria.Farooqi@uth.tmc.edu
- b. Update on Summer Research Program – Dr. Gary Rosenfeld and Dr. Jeffrey Frost
 - 1. Medical School Summer Research Program
 - a. In 2019, 71 students participated, 40 students were sponsored with \$2,000 per student (\$1000 from the Dean's office and \$1000 from faculty)
 - b. 2020 program canceled
 - c. 2021 Program anticipate 60 medical students with \$4,000 per student (\$2,500 from the Dean's office and \$1,500 from faculty)
 - i. College (undergraduate) and international student research students not being considered for this program this year
 - 2. Medical Student Research Paths/Opportunity in the Medical School
 - a. Summer Research Program
 - b. Scholarly Concentration Program (usually starts second semester of the MS1 year)
 - i. Basic, Clinical and Translational Sciences
 - ii. Humanities and Social Sciences
 - iii. Global Health, Public Health and Community Medicine
 - c. Academic Career Track
 - i. 3 required research blocks in MSIV year
 - ii. Scholarly Project/Product
 - iii. Presentation/Dissemination
 - iv. Mentors available
 - 3. GradSURP Summer Undergraduate Research Program
 - a. Purpose: provide research opportunities for undergraduate students interested in pursuing a doctoral degree in biomedical sciences
 - b. 10 students per year
 - c. 10 week program
 - d. \$4500 stipend
 - e. Faculty mentors at the McGovern Medical School and School of Dentistry
 - f. <https://med.uth.edu/oep/gradsurp>
 - 4. Questions: <https://med.uth.edu/oep/medical-student-information/>

7. Announcements

- a. For all upcoming lectures and activities, please see attachment
- b. Medical School Research Committee Activity Report
 - i. Research Retreat on March 02, 2021
 - ii. 8:30 a.m. –5:00 p.m., IMM, Beth Robertson Auditorium
Ernst Knobil Distinguished Lecture and Keynote Address:
[Paul Offit, M.D.](#)
Director of the Vaccine Education Center and
Attending Physician
Division of Infectious Diseases
Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
“**Vaccine Wars**”

8. Adjournment at 5:31PM

Next meeting: Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 4:30 PM

Dr. Catherine Ambrose – Chair
Dr. Nahid Rianon – Chair-Elect
Dr. Zi Yang Jiang – Secretary
Dr. Renee Flores – Secretary-Elect
Dr. Kenya Parks – 2019-2020 Past-Chair

[https://med.uth.edu/faculty-senate/
ms.facultysenate@uth.tmc.edu](https://med.uth.edu/faculty-senate/ms.facultysenate@uth.tmc.edu)